

ECOLOGICAL INTEGRATION SYMPOSIUM SET FOR COLLEGE STATION

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February 7, 2003

COLLEGE STATION – The fourth annual Ecological Integration Symposium will be Feb. 22 at the George Bush Presidential Conference Center at Texas A&M University here. Sessions, which are free and open to the public, will begin at 8 a.m.

The symposium, with this year's theme "Natural History and Modern Conservation," is interdepartmental effort by graduate students to provide a forum for the discussion and dissemination of current trends in ecology and related fields, according to Lance Fontaine, a wildlife and fisheries doctoral student from Laredo and one of the symposium organizers.

"We hope to foster interaction between students and established, well-known scientists," Fontaine said.

Six renowned scientists have agreed to speak at the event: Terry Erwin of the Smithsonian Institution, Harry Greene of Cornell University, Hans Paerl of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Maureen Stanton of the University of California-Davis, Tom Sherry of Tulane University, and Tom Swetnam of the University of Arizona.

Erwin's talk will be "Mapping patterns of biodiversity for beetles across the western Amazon Basin: A preliminary case for improving conservation strategies." Erwin is an invertebrate ecologist at the Smithsonian.

Greene, an evolutionary biology, will talk about "Darwin and Kant: Appreciating Biodiversity."

"Assessing estuarine ecological change: A moving target influenced by human and climatic perturbations" will be the topic for Paerl, a marine scientist.

Stanton will talk about "Evolutionary consequences of environmental heterogeneity for plant populations." She is a professor of evolution and ecology.

"The Garden of Eden meets Noah's Ark: Wildlife ecology in human-cultivated ecosystems" will be the topic for Sherry, an ecologist who specializes in the evolution of birds.

Swetnam, a professor of evolution and ecology, will talk about "Droughts, forest fires & people: Natural histories' from tree rings."

The seventh annual student symposium will take place prior to the main event. Undergraduates and graduate students will present their research Feb. 21, beginning at 9 a.m., in rooms 110-111 in the John J. Koldus Building. Topics will include ecology, evolution and natural resource management. Awards will be given in three categories: Best Oral Presentation – Graduate Student; Best Oral Presentation – Undergraduate Student; and Best Poster Presentation. A fish fry for participants will be held following those presentations.

Though the symposium is free, organizers suggest participants register in advance online at <http://eco-symposium.tamu.edu/eco-home.htm> to assist with facilities preparation.

The event is a collaborative effort of Texas A&M's departments of biology, entomology, forest science, oceanography, plant pathology and microbiology, rangeland ecology and management, wildlife and fisheries sciences, soil and crop sciences, and the Institute of Renewable Natural Resources.

